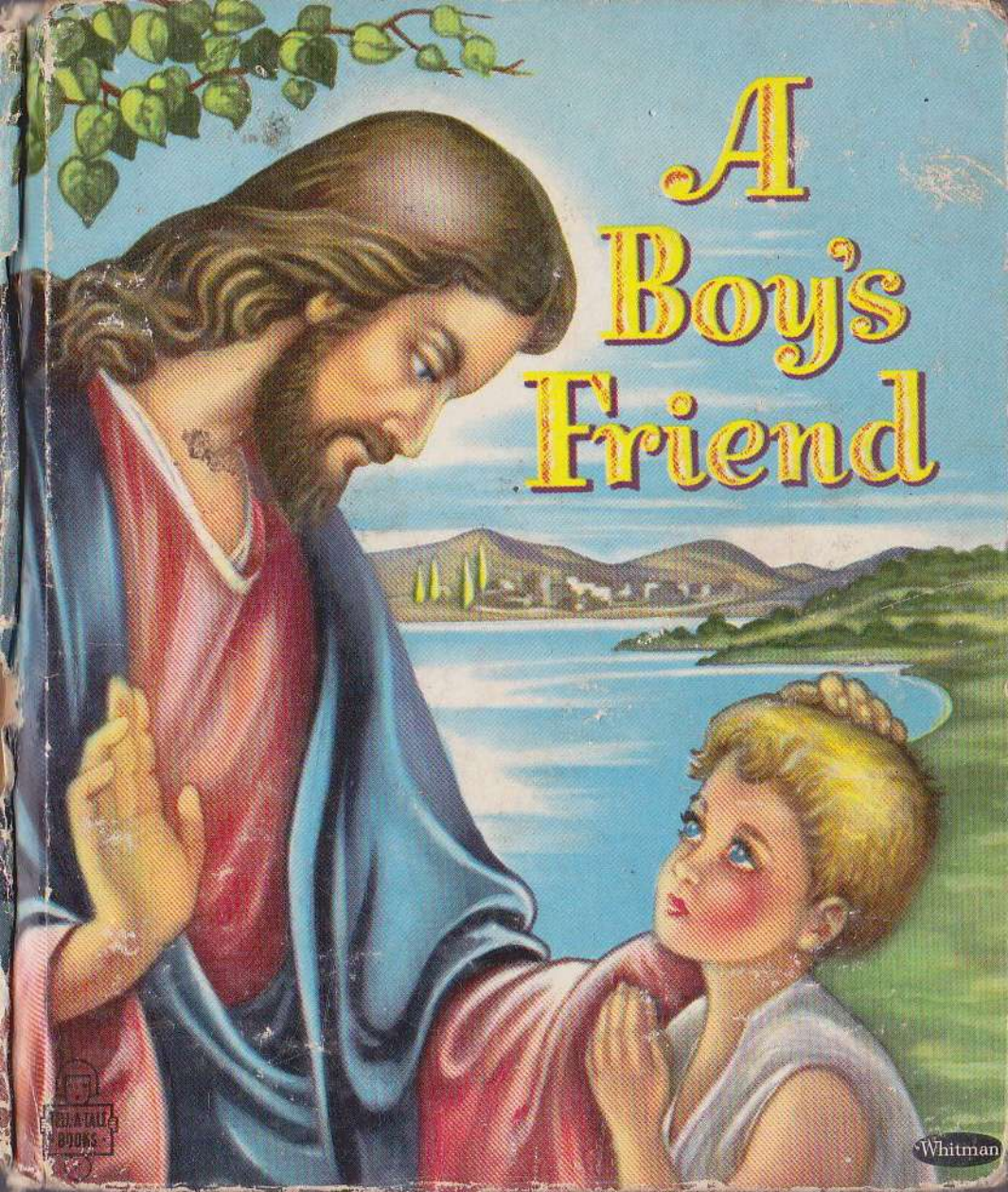
A Boy's Friend
Whitman

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by Robbie Trent

Illustrated by Egon Weiniger

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A cool breeze was blowing in the boy's face as he hurried down the path by the blue waters of the sea of Galilee. He was following a big crowd of people.

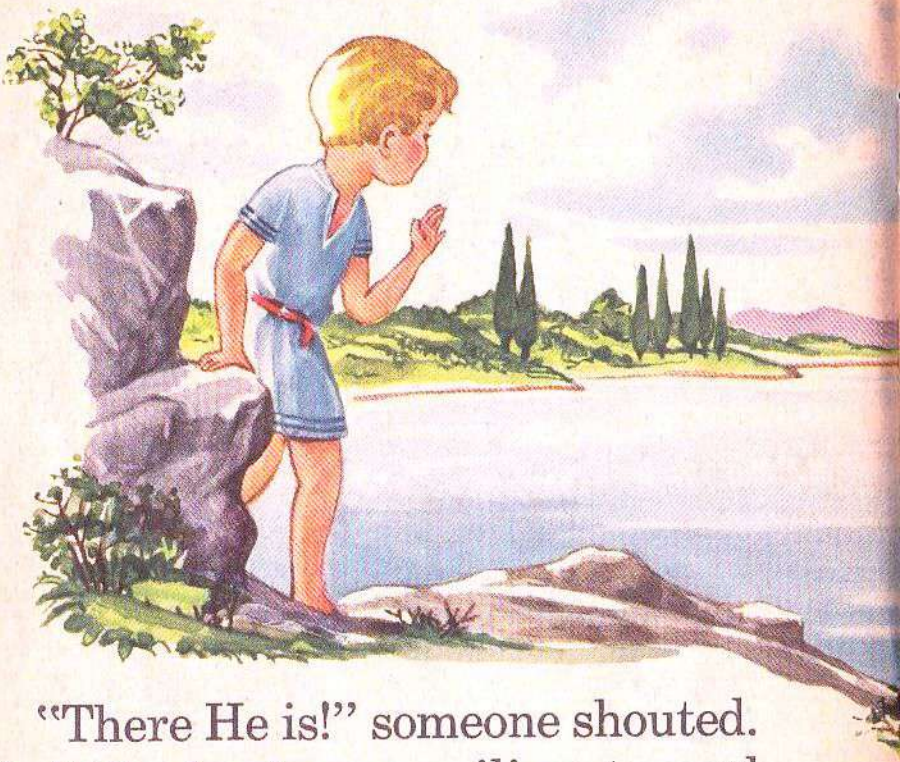
"Wait for me," the boy called. "I want to see Jesus, too."

On his arm the boy carried a basket of lunch which his mother had prepared for him that morning. My, it smelled good!

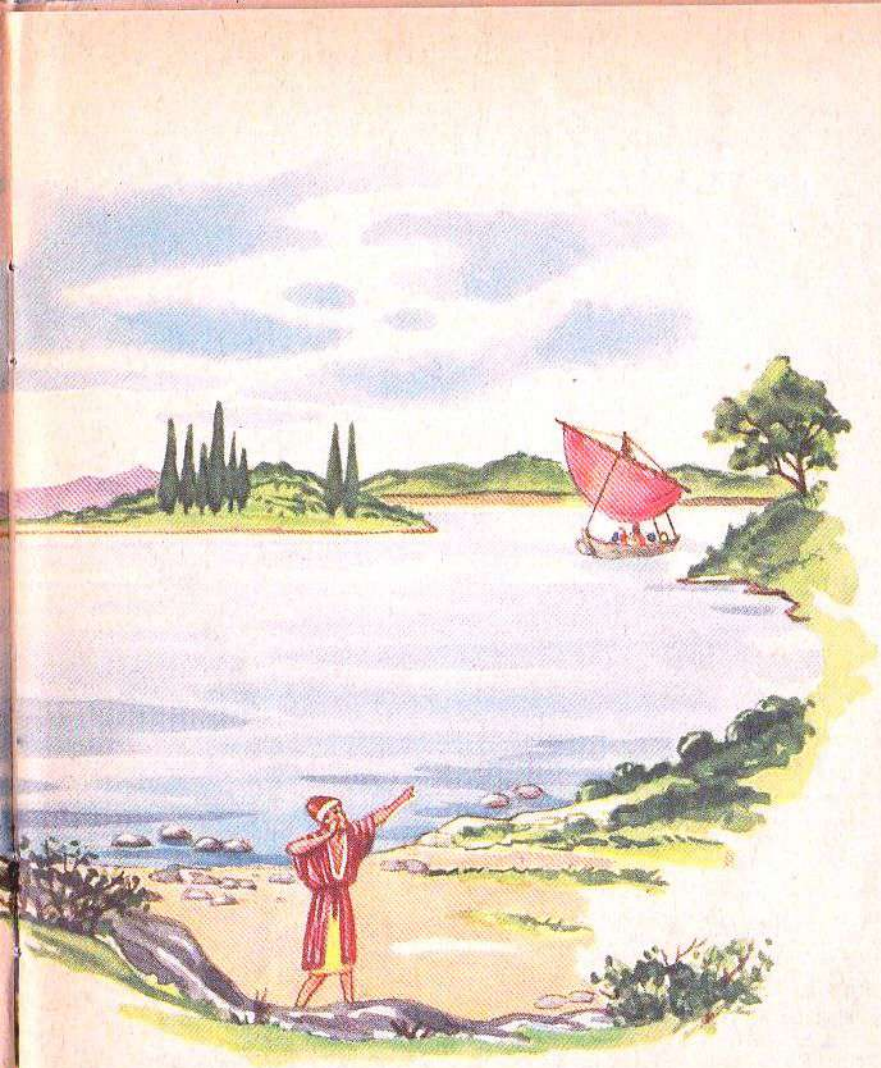
The boy stopped and lifted the lid of the basket. He counted, "One, two, three, four, five small barley cakes," — not quite enough lunch for a hungry boy.

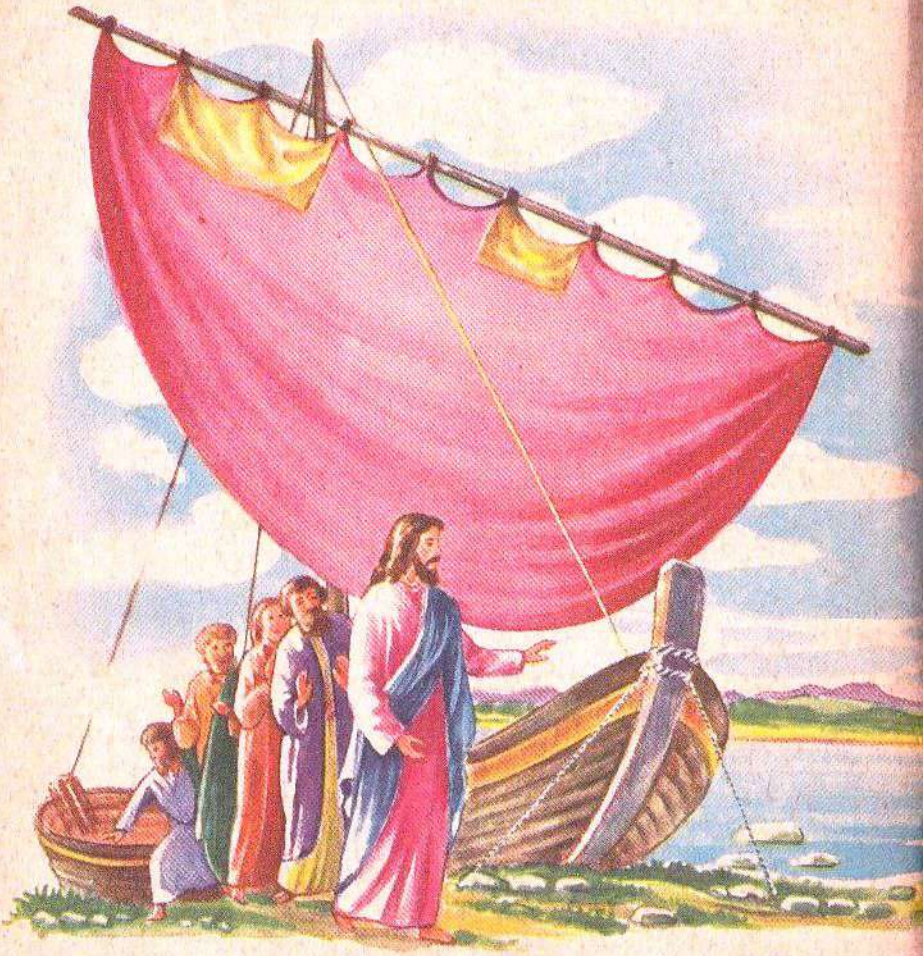
He looked again and counted, "One, two small fishes," — just enough to go with the barley cakes and make a good lunch for a hungry boy.

Then he began to run again. Soon he stood with the others down at the shore. He skipped stones into the lake while he waited for Jesus to come.



"There He is!" someone shouted. A little boat was sailing toward them. The boy climbed on a big rock so that he could see better.





Soon the boat touched shore, and Jesus and His disciples got out. Jesus held out His hands to the people and said, "I am glad to see you."

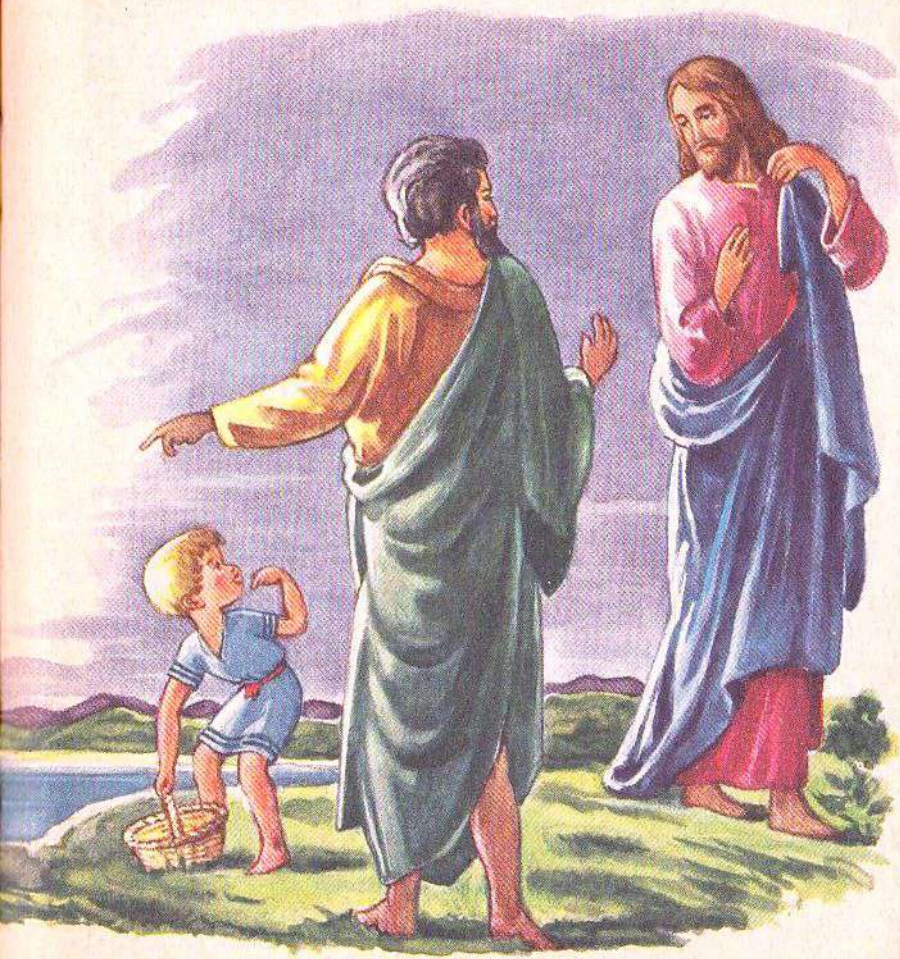
Quickly, the boy jumped down from the rock. He squeezed through the crowd to get close to Jesus. While he watched, Jesus touched a man's crippled arm and cured it. Another man's lame leg became well and strong at Jesus' touch.

All day the boy watched Him heal sick people and help sad people. He listened as Jesus told of God's love.

It was almost dark when a disciple friend came to Jesus. "Send these people home," he said. "They are hungry."

"Give them something to eat," Jesus told him.

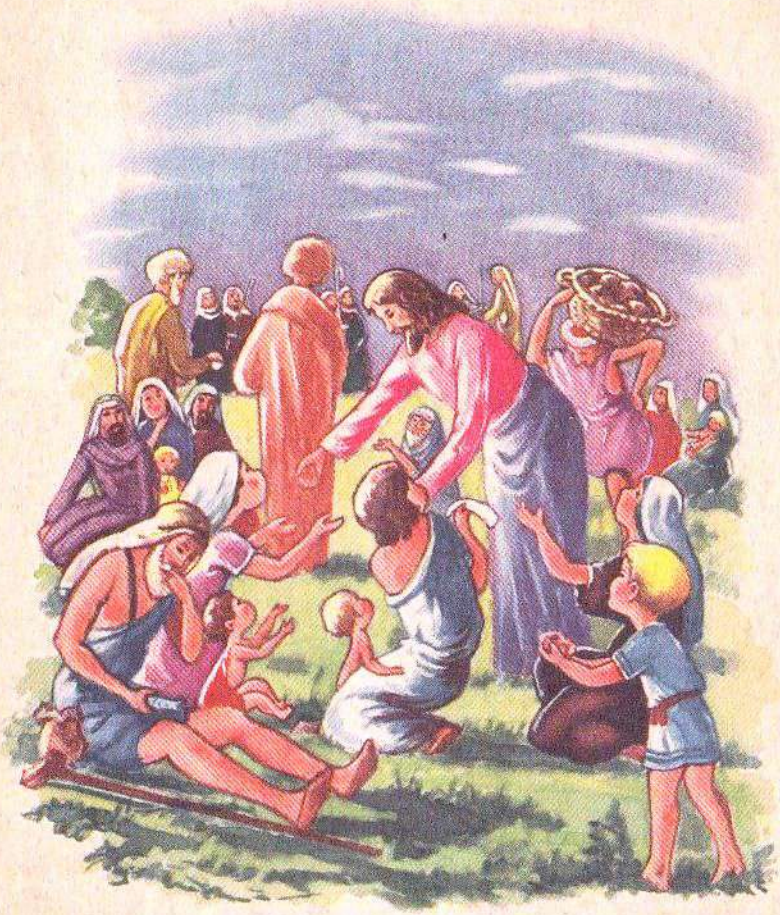
"But there are so many people here," replied the disciple. "It would take more than a house full of bread to give each one even a bite."



"Here are five barley cakes and two small fishes," the boy said, holding up his basket.

Jesus smiled. "Have the people sit down," He said. And the people sat down in the green grass—the mothers and fathers and the boys and girls.

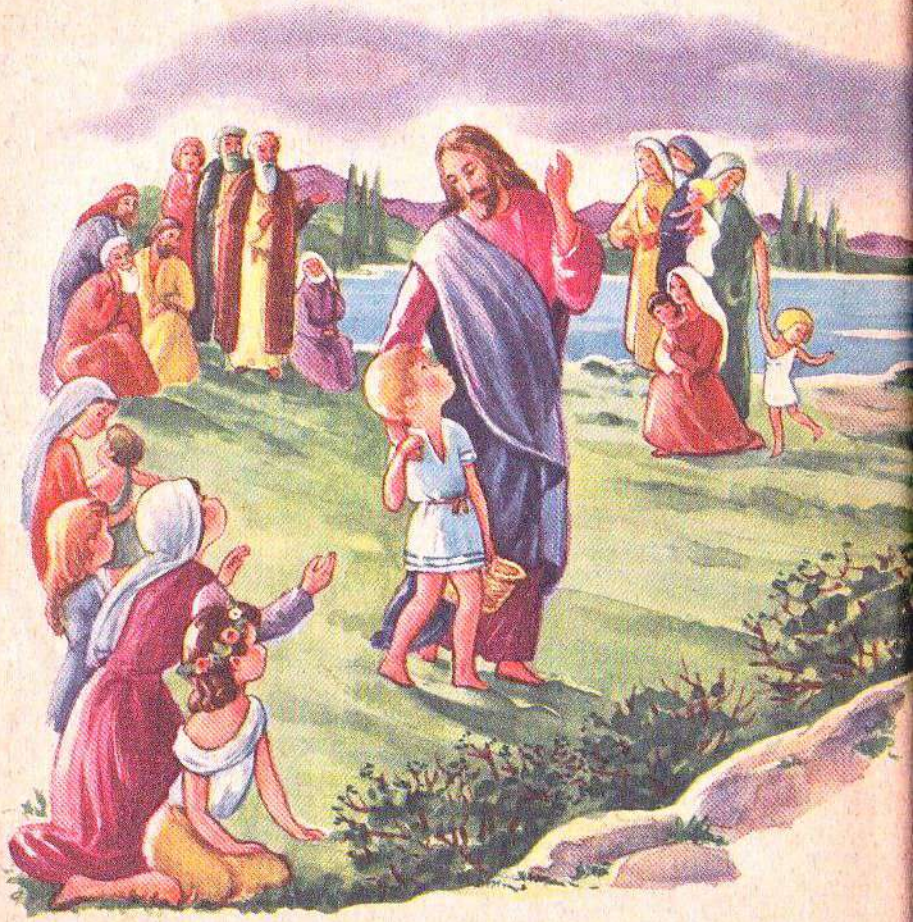
Jesus took the five barley cakes and the two small fishes. Then He thanked God for them. He broke the cakes and the fishes, and He and His disciples passed them to the people. There was enough for everyone!

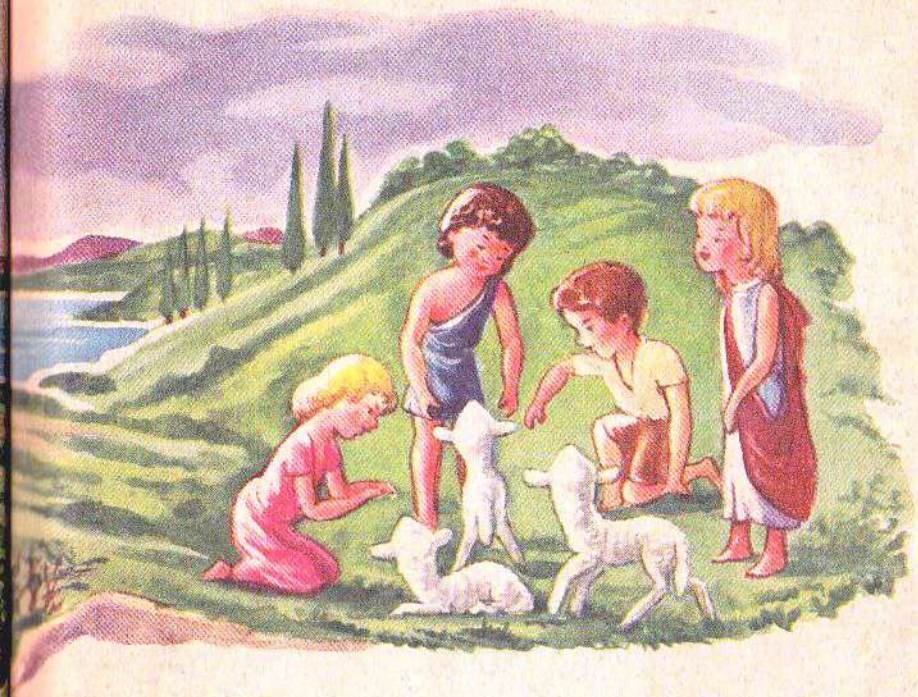


The boy sat down and ate until he couldn't swallow another bit. Never had his stomach been so full.

"Now gather up the leftover cakes and fishes," Jesus told His disciple friends.

The boy watched. He counted, "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve baskets of barley cakes and fishes left!"





The people were resting on the grass. Mothers were rocking their babies, and boys and girls were playing quietly.

The boy looked up at Jesus. Jesus smiled at him, and the boy smiled back. They were friends.

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PLAYMATE FOR PETER
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